Although 'stability' is not and probably should not be explicitly defined in the Code, Art. 79c does imply that usage over a 50 year period is a criterion of stability. A name uncontested for that period of time, immediately prior to the present, is, in effect, a *nomen veneratum*, a concept not so named but clearly implicit (even though not adequately emphasised) in provisions (particularly Art. 79) of the Code. Nomina venerata are simply names used without contest for the immediately preceding 50 years; they are not automatically conserved, but, if presented, a case made for them to be conserved is assured of consideration by the Commission. Names with less than 50 years of uncontested use have no such assurance. In other words, stability is certainly a consideration for nomina venerata; it is not necessarily a consideration for names with lesser periods of uncontested usage.

Applying these thoughts to the present case, it is obvious that *S. eurhostus* has much less than the desirable 50 years of usage — no more than 16 — whereas *Hyla lactea* Daudin has been in existence for 182 years and has been accepted as valid intermittently throughout that time. It seems to me much more in the interest of stability to perpetuate that name than to conserve a 16-year-old one even if the latter has had more usage during its brief existence than the former.

Stimson also suggested that, in order to clear the way for retention of *Hyla hypocondrialis* Daudin, 1803, as a valid name, Lynch & Duellman should cite 10 publications by at least 5 different authors during the last 50 years wherein that name was accepted, conforming with Art. 79c of the Code. However, that article pertains to synonyms, whereas Lynch & Duellman made it clear that the older name *Hyla lactea* Laurenti, 1768, which has simply been ignored by herpetologists throughout its history, despite having been suggested as a synonym of *H. hypocondrialis* as early as 1803 (by Daudin), is a nomen dubium of uncertain allocation, and for that reason had justifiably been ignored. Therefore, the names *H. lactea* Laurenti, 1768, and *H. hypocondrialis* Daudin, 1803, are not synonyms, and the latter need not therefore be supported by explicit data on frequency of its use. Both petitions attest to the wide and current use of the name (in the combination *Phyllomedusa hypocondrialis*). However, it would be useful to conserve Daudin's name while these related matters are under consideration.

Accordingly, I recommend approval by the Commission of all of Lynch and Duellman's requests, and in addition that the following be considered:

(5) placement of the specific name *hypocondrialis* as used in the combination *Hyla hypocondrialis* Daudin, 1803, p. 29, holotype lost, type-locality, 'Surinam', on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED GRANT OF PRECEDENCE TO THRESKIORNITHIDAE RICHMOND, 1917 (AVES) OVER PLATALEINAE BONAPARTE, 1838. Z.N.(S.)2136

(see vol. 41, pp. 240–244)

(1) By Kenneth E. Campbell (*Natural History Museum, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles 90007, U.S.A.*)

I wish to record my strong opposition to the placement of THRESKIORNITHIDAE Richmond, 1917 on the Official List of Family–Group Names in Zoology in place of the widely recognised and long-used PLATALEINAE Bonaparte, 1838.

Priority, the bedrock of zoological nomenclature, demands that the latter name be retained, if not in specific recommendation, then in the spirit of the Code. Temporary convenience in names desired by a few should not invalidate the principles of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.

(2) By Allan R. Phillips (*Apartado Postal 370, San Nicolás de los Garza 66450, Nuevo León, México*)

The application of Eisenmann, Mayr and Parkes is surprisingly inaccurate from the start. The incorrect name THRESKIORNITHIDAE Richmond, 1917 is by no means in 'almost universal' use outside North America, and is not even in universal use in the United States (see, for example, Brodkorb, 1963, *Bull. Florida State Mus.*, vol. 7, p. 277; Olson and James, 1983, *Smithson. Contrib. Zool.*, no. 365, pp. 33). The weight placed (para. 2 of the Application) on usage being 'now overwhelmingly in favour of THRESKIORNITHIDAE' (even if that were true) is a reversion to the long-discredited principle of *auctorum plurimorum*, whose instability was resolved many decades ago by universal adoption of the basic, non-political principle of priority.

The argument that family names should not be based on atypical genera (cf. Recommendation 64A of the Code) ignores both the basic principle of priority and the fact that just such genera were likely to attract attention and receive early names, and so it is not valid against PLATALEIDAE Bonaparte, 1838. A number of avian families are named after spectacular genera which are hardly 'representative'.

Para. 5 of the Application refers to the principle of continuing the taxonomic concept when a family-group name has to be replaced (Article 39 of the 1961 Code); this is not over-riding in the latest (1985) Edition, and extension of *any* subfamily name (not just PLATALEINAE) requires adjusting boundaries.

Point 9 of the Application is well taken. EUDOCIMINAE Bonaparte, 1854 indeed appears to be the correct name if the ibis group is considered a subfamily. This, however, is another reason *not* to use THRESKIORNITHIDAE or any suprageneric name based on *Threskiornis*. (I should perhaps explain that the use of THRESKIORNITHIDAE (and some other names) in Monson and Phillips' *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Arizona*, 2nd Ed. (1981) was due to the University of Arizona Press' refusal to correct a number of errors in Monson's first draft, seen only later by me. Thus this text does not always reflect my opinions or knowledge).

Point 10, the question of how to deal with the names EUDOCIMINAE and PLEGADIDAE Mathews, 1913, shows the complications caused by departures from correct nomenclature, and thus the undesirability of interference with priority—exactly what Eisenmann *et al.* propose!

The 1961 Code introduced the application of the principle of priority to family-group names. Since Codes and Commissions derive their authority from the will of zoologists at large, the Commission would be well advised to support at least the more reasonable articles of the Code. Having decided on priority, let it maintain priority, applying the rules to *all*. If some are exempted, more and more zoologists will ignore the Commission and its recent Codes.

In summary, PLATALEIDAE is preferable and correct: it has priority, avoids a bad discrepancy among dates of subfamily names, and, *contra* Eisenmann, Mayr and Parkes, is in world-wide use and is the current name in the field guides to the birds of some continents. It is being used increasingly by those working on the phylogeny and paleontology of these birds. To ignore all this in favour of someone's personal preference will only undermine the Commission's credibility and aleniate increasing numbers of zoologists.

(3) By Storrs L. Olson (*Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, U.S.A.*), Amadeo M. Rea (*Natural History Museum P.O. Box 1390, San Diego, California 92112, U.S.A.*), and Pierce Brodkorb (*Department of Zoology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 32611, U.S.A.*)

In applying to give the family name THRESKIORNITHIDAE Richmond, 1917, 'precedence' over PLATALEINAE Bonaparte, 1838, Eisenmann, Mayr, and Parkes have contended that the use of PLATALEIDAE as the family name for the ibises and spoonbills would 'upset general usage' and might be confusing. We would point out that the name THRESKIORNITHIDAE itself had never been used anywhere prior to 1917, yet when it was introduced no one seems to have admitted to being particularly confused by it at the time. One might ask whether nomenclature is to be dictated by the inability to comprehend it of those who are not trained in its use, or by the mentally deficient for whom the unfamiliar only provokes confusion.

In their application, Eisenmann *et al.* have clearly attempted to equate *current familiarity* with 'general usage'. This ignores the fact that systematic zoologists, as opposed to birdwatchers who need use only the most recent field guides, must avail themselves to the entire literature of their discipline. For the first 159 years of formal nomenclatural history of the ibises and spoonbills (1758–1917), *all* higher-level group names that included these birds were formed on some name other than *Threskiornis*. Eisenmann *et al.* have themselves documented the fact that THRESKIORNITHIDAE was far from universally accepted after Richmond proposed it in 1917 and that alternative names were in regular use at least up until the 1960's.

Their application does not reflect the fact that many of the most active zoologists and paleontologists currently engaged in original systematic research on ibises have favoured PLATALEIDAE over THRESKIORNITHIDAE in their publications, at least when not obliged to follow the dictates of editors who insist that authors conform with 'majority usage'. Furthermore, PLATALEIDAE continues to be used in recent general works in areas outside North America (e.g. Pizzey, 1980; Maclean, 1985).

We do not feel that counting the number of papers and books that use one name or another is an appropriate activity for systematic zoologists. Nor is it proper to advocate a particular nomenclatural usage because it is employed in works that are subjectively judged to be 'important', 'authoritative', or 'prestigious', as might be inferred from Eisenmann *et al.* Because of the vagueness and uncertainty of determining what shall be taken as 'general' or 'current', the Code of Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union (1908), which provided a foundation for the modern International Code, unequivocally disavowed the principle of *auctorum plurimorum* (pp. x, xlvii), which is what Eisenmann *et al.* are now trying to resurrect. Even if such an unworkable principle were in effect, it is certain that in the total literature of systematic ornithology the name used for the family of ibises and spoonbills would most frequently be something other than THRESKIORNITHIDAE.

Some subfamilial name must be retained for the use of those who would segregate the spoonbills from the typical ibises. Therefore, Eisenmann *et al.* have proposed that PLATALEINAE Bonaparte, 1838, be retained, but that the Commission use its plenary powers to give THRESKIORNITHIDAE precedence as the name of the family. This would mean that the family would contain a subfamily based on an older name. Now this we *do* find confusing, as well as inconsistent, illogical, and unnecessary.

The law of priority is wonderfully simple and can be easily and immediately applied by any zoologist. Had priority been in effect earlier for the formation of family group names it would have prevented the unnecessary introduction of the names THRESKIORNITHIDAE and PLEGADIDAE in the first place. Just because there have been 'no adequate available synonymies for family-group names' of birds does not mean that sound nomenclatural rules should give way to poor scholarship. We particularly deplore the many recent *ad hoc* attempts by ornithologists to subvert various rules of nomenclature in order to preserve names that are judged in some quarters to be more familiar (see also Olson's comments in Wetmore *et al.*, 1984, p. 553).

In summary, it is our contention (a) that a case has *not* been made that the continued use of PLATALEIDAE as the family name for ibises and spoonbills would 'upset general usage' and (b) that the retention of the older name PLATALEINAE as a subgroup of the younger name THRESKIORNITHIDAE would result in an illogical and contradictory situation that could not and would not be adopted by conscientious and knowledgeable systematists. Therefore we strongly oppose the application of Eisenmann *et al.*, and we recommend that PLATALEIDAE be used as the family-level name for the ibises and spoonbills. If a subfamilial name be needed for typical ibises, it would probably be best to use the oldest available name, EUDOCIMINAE Bonaparte, 1854, so as not to clutter the literature with further applications and opinions.

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FURTHER COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED CONSERVATION OF *SOUTHERNIA* ALLGEN, 1929 BY THE SUPPRESSION OF *SOUTHERNIA* FILIPJEV, 1927 (NEMATODA). Z.N.(S)940

By W. Grant Inglis (*Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser, GPO Box 1625, Adelaide, South Australia 5001*)

The former Secretary has resurrected part of a proposal made by Allgen in 1959 (*Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 17, pp. 86–88) on which I commented adversely in 1961 (vol. 18, p. 8). I still do so, some quarter of a century later. My previous opposition